Patents Office directly fdr patenting his invention. However, the Ministry has recently formulated a new scheme called Non-Conventional Energy Technology Commercialization Fund (NETCOF), under which research organizations and industry can seek support for pre-commercial development and pilot production of a product or technology. There are no proposals relating to such inventions pending with the Ministry for support under this scheme.

Installation of solar energy system for heating water by Group Housing Societies

383. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA' Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any incentive given to Co-operative Group housing Societies to install solar energy system for heating water;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this scheme has been a success; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI M. KANNAPPAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Under an Interest Subsidy Scheme of the Ministry, soft loans are being offered for installation of solar water heaters. The scheme is being implemented through IREDA and its financial intermediaries as well as seven public sector banks through their designated branches. Loans arc available at 5% interest rate to individuals, small business establishments and nonprofit organizations, and 8.3% interest rate for profit making organizations. Co-operative group housing societies arc eligible for loans at 5% interest rate for installation of solar water heaters, the same benefit is also available to members of the societies in their individual capacity.

(c) The response to the soft loan scheme has been good, especially in the last 2-3 years. A large number of individual and institutional users have availed of the loan facility. Water heating systems using a total of 110,000 square metre of solar collectors have been financed so far under this scheme. In case of housing societies, members often

prefer taking loans individually, keeping in view the security requirement of the "banks.

(d) Does not arise.

Popularisation of improved chulhas in Andhra Pradesh

384. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any action plan to popularise improved chulhas in the remote, tribal and backward areas of Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI M. KANNAPPAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The National Programme on improved chulhas (NPIC) is being implemented in all States and Union Territories, including remote, tribal and backward areas of Andhra Pradesh. The programme provides for Central subsidy, self-employed workers' charges, training of users and self-employed workers. State-level Technical Back-Up Units and publicity. The State nodal agency, i.e., Non-Conventional Energy Development Corporation of Andhra Pradesh (NEDCAP) achieved a target of 1.5 lakh improved chulhas during 2000-2001 and has planned a target of 1.75 lakh improved chulhas for 2001-2002. Besides, Khadi and Village Industries Commission and All India Women's Conference arc also implementing NPIC in the State. These agencies make efforts to achieve at least 30 per cent of the allocated annual targets by benefiting people in tribal, remote and backward areas.

Providing funds for reconstruction and repair work of old Hydel Power Projects

† 385. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

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† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.